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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 12, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RAY LAHOOD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Reverend Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, Pastor, Ray of Hope Christian Church, Decatur, Georgia, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life. In the words of the Psalmist, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your hands, the moon and the stars which You have set in place, what is man and woman that You are mindful of them? You made them a little lower than the heavenly beings. You made them ruler over the works of Your hands."

God, You have given each of the persons assembled in this place the ability and the authority to govern this great Nation of ours. You have positioned them to set policy for the provision and protection of the people. You have designated these men and women to make decisions for the continued liberty and justice for all.

Now, God, grant them wisdom. Give them the courage this day to govern with Your grace and for Your glory. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the

last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NETHERCUTT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. NETHERCUTT led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING THE REVEREND DR. CYNTHIA L. HALE, PASTOR, RAY OF HOPE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, DECATUR, GEORGIA

(Ms. MAJETTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MAJETTE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased this morning to welcome the Reverend Dr. Cynthia L. Hale, Senior Pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church in Decatur, Georgia. Pastor Hale is a 1979 graduate of Duke University's School of Divinity and she was ordained that same year. She has been the Pastor of the Ray of Hope Christian Church for 18 years. The church is known to all of us in my district affectionately as "The Ray."

Pastor Hale has been a good steward of the resources that God has entrusted to her. She has helped countless people be able to continue their lives and to grow in faith and strength. She has been a mentor and a friend to me over the years.

Mr. Speaker, I am truly blessed, we are all truly blessed, to have her here with us this morning.

APPRECIATING ALL COMPANIES, BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC, THAT WANT TO DO BUSINESS IN THE UNITED STATES

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, in April it was reported that employers added 288,000 jobs to the payroll, including 21,000 in the manufacturing sector. Progress is being made. The outsourcing-insourcing debate then has waned a little bit.

But I want to highlight Richland County in Illinois, 16,000 people in the community of Olney, that has 8,000. They actively pursue and ask for international business to come. In fact they are home for companies from Germany, Austria, Japan, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands. These international companies located in rural Illinois provide high wages and great benefits to their citizens.

We should be appreciative of all companies that create jobs, both U.S. companies and international companies, that want to do business in the United States.

TIMING OF RED CROSS CONCERNS

(Mr. CONYERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, reading the Wall Street Journal yesterday, which I read more than some suspect, I was told that the Red Cross had complained to Secretary of State Colin Powell about the prison abuses and torture and other embarrassments for months, which was a new revelation to me.

But today the Baltimore Sun says, and here it is, "Powell says Bush was informed of Red Cross concerns and that he had been fully informed in general terms about complaints made by

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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the Red Cross and others over ill-treatment of detainees in custody.”

Now, this is not about privates and corporals. And, by the way, the woman in charge of the camp said that she was put under pressure.

AL QAEDA CONNECTION, ZARQAWI, CONTINUES TO HARM AMERICA

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the world was shocked by a video depicting the savage beheading of an American civilian by Iraq's al Qaeda connection, Abu Musab al Zarqawi.

It is time to put an end to the intentional denial that al Qaeda had no connection with Saddam Hussein. Secretary of State Colin Powell warned the U.N. in February 2003 that after the victory in Afghanistan, al Qaeda operatives set up new camps in Iraq, led by Osama bin Laden's lieutenant, Zarqawi, who was allowed free operation in Baghdad by Saddam Hussein.

Since then, Zarqawi has led al Qaeda within Iraq to bomb the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad and to attempt the killing last month of 80,000 in Jordan with chemical weapons. Additionally, in his letter to al Qaeda leadership, Zarqawi admitted to masterminding the daily attacks in Iraq.

We are fighting al Qaeda terrorists in Iraq as part of the global war on terror. Yet, despite our enemy's savagery, our brave troops will fight and win this war to protect American families.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the goals of Cover the Uninsured Week. In California, 1 out of every 5 of our uninsured population is a child under the age of 18.

This week, the House leadership has scheduled votes that would help big insurance companies. Instead, Congress should be taking action to ensure that no child has to skip needed health care checkups and is not left behind.

We should pass the Family Care Act to provide working families and children with health insurance. The bill could cover approximately 7.5 million low-income parents and improve health care coverage.

We should also pass the Health Care Equality and Accountability Act, H.R. 3459, which would both provide expanded health coverage and eliminate racial and ethnic health care disparities. More than one-third of Latinos and 19 percent of Asian Pacific islanders lack health insurance.

We must come together to combat our uninsured crisis. Together, we can make sure that every family has access to high quality and affordable health care.

PROVIDING THE SECURITY OF AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE

(Mr. KNOLLENBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, in response to the gentlewoman that just spoke, there is another alternative that we can talk about as well, because throughout the country, small business owners face a problem, because they cannot afford to offer their employees health insurance.

The Small Business Health Fairness Act, H.R. 4281, which we are going to debate this week, helps to resolve health care benefit concerns for small businesses and their employees. Through Association Health Plans, small businesses will have the ability to secure affordable health care contracts. Uninsured employees will receive the security of affordable health insurance.

Here is something that I think is significant: Out of the 44 million uninsured Americans, so called, about 25 million of them are people in small businesses, either the dependents or the employees themselves.

The price of health care benefits has risen by 12 percent this year alone. Escalating health care premiums makes it nearly impossible for small business owners to afford to offer health care benefits to their employees.

H.R. 4281 will make health insurance a reality for small businesses. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

PROVIDING HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICANS

(Mr. BERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, every American should be confident that whether they lose their job, change jobs, get sick or just grow old, they should be able to find affordable, reliable health care.

We know how to do this. I agree with the gentleman on the other side of the aisle. We have the ultimate association health plan available. We could make every American eligible for the Federal Employees Benefit Plan at their own expense. That would be the ultimate in the association health care plan. We can also make people over 55 eligible for Medicare. We can make low-income working families eligible for Medicaid.

We know how to provide health care coverage for the American people. If we are going to do this, we also know that we have to provide a fair, reasonably priced pharmaceutical product to these

same people. We cannot continue to allow the drug manufacturers to rob the American people.

COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

(Mr. RYUN of Kansas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYUN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, next Monday, May 17, 2004, marks the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in Brown versus the Board of Education. On this historic day, the Supreme Court issued a definitive interpretation of the 14th amendment to the Constitution, stating that the discriminatory nature of racial segregation is a violation of the 14th amendment.

Although 50 years have come and gone, this decision continues to have a profound effect upon our society. It has permanently altered the conventional social structure in traditionally segregated areas and has outlawed discrimination.

Although the celebration next Monday bears the name of Reverend Oliver Brown, it will be a celebration of all those who fought to rid our society of the practice of separate and unequal public schooling.

I would like to thank the Members of Congress who voted for the legislation which established the commission to commemorate the 50th anniversary of this historic decision, and I would also like to thank especially Cheryl Brown Henderson, the granddaughter of plaintiff Oliver Brown, along with the members of the Brown Commission, for the work in making this celebration a reality.

I am grateful for the small part I played. I encourage our colleagues to join us in celebration on this day.

CONGRESS SHIRKING ITS RESPONSIBILITY

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this last month has been a hard month: Hard for our soldiers in Iraq as we lost more lives than any previous month; it was hard on the people of that troubled country; and it was hard on the American public as citizens of conscience and people who are footing the bill. It has also been hard on Congress.

I personally believe the Speaker and the chair of the key committees to be people of conscience, and they must be terribly embarrassed as the world sees what happens when Congress shirks its responsibility to set policy, control spending and provide oversight.

It is as sad as it is outrageous that Congress and the President of the United States find out at the same time as millions of people around the